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## **Sen. Kuipers introduces abstinence initiative**

**Lansing** — Sen. Wayne Kuipers (R-Holland) introduced legislation today giving parents a larger role in how public schools teach sex education.

Kuipers' proposal would require students be taught about the responsibility of being a parent, as well as describe adoption as a positive option for unplanned pregnancies and encourage abstinence until marriage. It also would require teaching that abstinence is the only 100-percent effective way to avoid pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Kuipers noted how President George W. Bush proposed more funding for abstinence programs for teenagers in his State of the Union Address this month.

“My proposal helps ensure young people are fully informed of the consequences of their behavior and that abstinence is the only truly effective way of preventing pregnancies and contracting diseases,” Kuipers said.

Rep. Scott Hummel (R-DeWitt), who is advocating the legislation with Kuipers, called the proposal common sense.

“Parents are held responsible for the behavior of their children,” Hummel said. “This legislation seeks to make sure that parents are given a place at the table for deciding what is taught to children about acceptable social behavior. If we expect parents to take care of their teenage children who face unplanned pregnancies, then we should certainly welcome their voice in what will be taught at school. These bills create a way for them to be proactive instead of reactive to problems that will affect their teens for life.”

The legislation also would create health-education advisory panels formed by local school boards. The majority of members on the panels would have to be parents of children attending school in the district. Another part of the package would create a complaint process that could result in a 5-percent penalty in school aid for noncompliance.

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